

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0737

INFO AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSKA

USUN NEW YORK 0595

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0654

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: XA

SUBJ: OAU CHAIRMAN BONGO ON AFRICAN PROBLEMS

REF: LIBREVILLE 0636 (NOTAL)

1. DURING COURSE MARCH 14 MEETING WITH OAU CHAIRMAN BONGO
ON THE HORN (REFTTEL), BONGO EXPOUNDED HIS VIEWS ON SEVERAL
CURRENT PROBLEM AREAS IN AFRICA INCLUDING ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA,
ZAIRE, CONGO AND CHAD TO AMBASSADOR AND DCM. BONGO, WHO
WAS JUST WINDING UP TWO DAYS OF MEETINGS WITH NUMEROUS
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VISITING DELEGATIONS FROM AFRICAN AND OTHER COUNTRIES
FOR THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF RENOVATION DAY, GABON'S MOST
IMPORTANT HOLIDAY, WAS CORDIAL AND ANIMATED. HE CONSIDERED
HIMSELF TO BE SHARING HIS VIEWS FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS
"FRIEND JIMMY CARTER." WE CONSIDER BONGO TO HAVE
BEEN SPEAKING OPENLY AS PRESIDENT OF GABON AND NO
DOUBT WOULD MODERATE SOME OF FOLLOWING IN HIS OAU

CAPACITY.

2. ON ZIMBABWE, BONGO IMPLIED WE TREATED TOO CLOSELY WITH PATRIOTIC FRONT AND SAID HE WAS NOT IN AGREEMENT WITH US AND HAD TOLD AMB. YOUNG SO. OAU RESOLUTION, HE SAID, HAD BEEN TO RECOGNIZE PATRIOTIC FRONT AS SOLE MILITARY LEADERSHIP; NOT POLITICAL. IT WAS NOT MEANT TO CONFRE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE ON ANY ONE GROUP. THAT SHOULD BE DECIDED BY ELECTIONS BUT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT DOES NOT WANT TO CONTEST ELECTIONS. AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT OUR POSITION WAS NOT AS BONGO IMPLIED. WE STILL FELT THAT ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN OUGHT TO PROVIDE BASIS FOR SETTLEMENT WHICH IF POSSIBLE SHOULD INCLUDE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND THE LEGITIMATE INTERNAL NATIONALISTS. TO THAT END WE ARE SEEKING TO BRING ALL PARTIES TOGETHER. INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WAS A NEW DEVELOPMENT TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT PARTICULARLY WHERE IT TOUCHED ON ELEMENTS OF AAP. BONGO BACKED OFF, NODDED IN APPARENT AGREEMENT, AND STATED HIS CONCERN WAS THAT ANOTHER ANGOLA BE AVOIDED.

3. ON NAMIBIA BONGO STATED PRETORIA IS GETTING CLOSE TO ITS OWN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WITH THE "SEVEN INTERNAL PARTIES" WHO ARE PREPARED TO EXCLUDE THE EXTERNAL SWAPO, SPECIFICALLY NUJOMA. HE REPORTED THAT THE INTERNAL PARTIES HAD WRITTEN TO HIM AND THAT THEY WERE READY TO GO AHEAD WITHOUT NUJOMA. THEN IN A COMPLICATED AND CONFIDENTIAL

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SOMEWHAT CONVOLUTED EXPOSITION, BONGO PREDICTED THAT EVEN THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE PEPARED TO SACRIFICE NUJOMA'S SWAPO. HIS REASONING SEEMED TO BE BASED PRIMARILY ON MOZAMBICAN DEPENDANCE UPON SOUTH AFRICA FOR VARIOUS ECONOMIC ARRANGEMENTS WITHOUT WHICH THE PRO-SOVIET MACHEL REGIMEMIGHT FALL. THUS, THE SOVIETS WILL BE RELUCTANT TO BACK EXTERNAL SWAPO MILITARY ACTIVITIES AIMED AT UPSETTING ANY SMITH AFRICAN APPROVED SETTLEMENT THATMIGHT BE REACHED WITHOUT THEM FOR FEAR OF TRIGGERING SOUTH AFRICAN RETALIATION AGAINST MOZAMBIQUE ETC. HE ALSO LINKED SOVIET HESITANCY TO BACK NUJOMA TO SAVIMBI'S GUERRILLA ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA ALLUDING TO LARGE MEMBERS OF NAMIBIA'S LARGEST ETHNIC GROUP (OBVIOUSLY REFERRING TO THE OVAMBO) ON BOTH SIDE OF NAMIBIA/ ANGOLA BORDER.

4. BONGO EXPRESSED SOME DISCONTENT WITH HOW HIS FRIEND MOBUTO WAS MANAGING ZAIRE. MOBUTO HAD ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO ATTEND RENOVATION DAY BUT, BECAUSE OF INTERNAL PROBLEMS, HAD SENT HIS PRIME MINISTER INSTEAD. BONGO REFERRED TO THE ECONOMIC MORASS AND THE "HUGE LOAN" HE HAD ARRANGED TO BAIL OUT ZAIRE. THEN HE TURNED TO THE TRIALS CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE IN KINSHASA AND CRITICIZED

MOBUTO'S METHODS OF DEALING WITH OPPOSITION OR THOSE WHO HAVE MERELY MADE MISTAKES. BONGO MENTIONED HIS PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMMUTATION OF THE DEATH SENTENCE OF FORMER MINISTER NGUZA KARL I BOND LAST YEAR WHO BONGO DESCRIBED AS PERFECTLY LOYAL TO MOBUTO. HE SAID HE WAS NOT GOING TO GET INVOLVED AGAIN BUT HAD RECOMMENDED TO MOBUTO THAT ALL HE REALLY NEED DO IS ARREST, TRY, IMPRISON AND SUBSEQUENTLY PARDON OPPONENTS AFTER THEY HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO REFLECT. HE SIGHED AS IF MOBUTO WOULD NEVER LEARN ADDING THAT DESPITE HIS SHORTCOMINGS, BONGO DID NOT SEE HOW ZAIRE COULD SURVIVE WITHOUT MOBUTO.

5. MOVING NORTH TO CONGO, BONGO PREDICTED SERIOUS INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES SOON. THE PROBLEMS, AS HE EXPLAINED IT, STEM
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FROM THE FACT THAT PRESIDENT YHOMBY OPANGO AS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT, HAS NO POSITION OF AUTHORITY IN THE CONGOLESE WORKERS PARTY. YHOMBY OPANGO, ACCORDING TO BONGO, TRIES TO BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE AND IS ADDING A TOUCH OF DEMAGOGUERY. ALTHOUGH HE CLAIMS NOT BE BE MARXIST WHEN APPROACHING THE WEST FOR ASSISTANCE, YHOMBY OPANGO FACILELY READS MARXIST SPEECHES GIVEN HIM BY PARTY SO AS NOT TO OFF-SET RUSSIANS AND CUBANS WHO ARE PROPPING UP THE COUNTRY. BONGO'S CLEAR FAVORITE FOR RECTIFYING THE POLITICAL SITUATION (WE GATHER BY JOINING PARTY AUTHORITY WITH GOVERNMENTAL POSITION) IS MINISTER OF DEFENSE SASSOUNGUESSO WHO REPRESENTED CONGO AT MARCH 12 RENOVATION DAY CELEBRATIONS AND APPARENTLY FILLED BONGO'S EAR. (INTERESTINGLY, A SECOND CONGOLESE DELEGATION HEADED BY MADAME YHOMBY OPANGO, ARRIVED MARCH 15 TO DELIVER CONDOLENCES OVER THE FEBRUARY 20 DISAPPEARANCE OF THE HELICOPTER WITH PRESIDENT BONGO'S BROTHER-IN-LAW ABOARD. BONGO DESCRIBED SASSOUNGUESSO AS "MORE HONEST" THAN YHOMBY OPANGO. HE SAID HE WAS WARNING US OF THE POTENTIAL INSTABILITY IN CONGO BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN GETTING US-CONGOLESE RELATIONS REESTABLISHED.

6. FINALLY TURNING TO CHAD, PRESIDENT BONGO AGAIN PLED FOR DIRECT US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE MALLOUM GOVERNMENT. THE SEHBA CONFERENCE, ALTHOUGH IT APPEARED TO HAVE QUIETED THINGS FOR THE MOMENT, HE SAID, WAS MEANINGLESS. LIBYA WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE REBELS WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY WIN OUT. BONGO STATED THAT QADHAFI HAD ONCE TOLD HIM THAT HE WOULD NOT CEASE THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHAD SO LONG AS THERE WAS A PRESIDENT WITH A NAME OF FELIX OR JACQUES OR ANY OTHER CHRISTIAN NAME. IT MUST BE A MOSLEM. BONGO THEN MADE ANOTHER PITCH FOR US ARMS TO CHAD AND IF NOT DIRECT, THEN VIA THIRD COUNTRIES
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SUCH AS IRAN. WE REPLIED DRAWING UPON PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED
GUIDANCE ON THIRD COUNTRY TRANSFERS. BONGO EVOKED HIS
FEARS OF THE SOVIETS GRAND DESIGN FOR AFRICA WHICH WOULD
LEAVE THEM NOT ONLY DOMINANT ON THE CONTINENT BUT WOULD
ISOLATE FRIENDS OF OURS IN THE MIDDLE EAST SUCH
AS SAUDI ARABIA IF WE DID NOT MOVE TO MEET THE THREAT.TIENKEN

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